

Minutes from a Meeting of the Concordia Council on Student Life
Held on March 6, 2009
Loyola Campus AD-210, 10 am

PRESENT: Ms. Elizabeth Morey (Chair), Ms. Lauren Broad (Secretary), Ms. Anna Barrafato, Mr. Gerald Beasley, Dr. Donald Boisvert, Dr. Catherine Bolton, Ms. Claudie Boujaklian, Mr. Jean Brisebois, Ms. Daniela Caputo, Mr. Elie Chivi, Mr. Roger Côté, Ms. Catherine Dicaire, Ms. Angela Ghabban, Mr. Colin Goldfinch, Ms. Priscila Gomes, Ms. Marlene Gross, Ms. Cathy Lin, Ms. Lina Lipscombe, Mr. Rodney Roberts (on behalf of Ms. Katherine Hedrich), Mr. Jean-Philippe Savard, Mr. Mansimarjot Singh Samra, Ms. Katie Sheahan, Ms. Laura Stanbra, Ms. Brigitte St-Laurent, Mr. Devin Wells.

ABSENT WITH REGRETS: Ms. Lorraine Toscano, Ms. Rose Wangechi.

ABSENT: Ms. Johanne De Cubellis, Ms. Melanie Drew, Mr. Kurt Reckziegel.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chair called the meeting to order. Dr. Boisvert moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Côté seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair notified the Council members that Mr. Goldfinch would be replacing Ms. Kashfi as an undergraduate student representative on CCSL. She also reminded members that the deadline for the CCSL Outstanding Contribution Awards was March 9th and encouraged everyone to promote it as much as possible. The newly formed Volunteer Initiative would be presenting a volunteer recognition of staff, faculty and student volunteers at the CCSL Awards night (April 2nd, 2009) and the deadline for submissions was March 12th. The Chair reminded Council of the CSU elections being held from March 24th to 26th, 2009 and wished to encourage students to vote.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 13TH, 2009

Mr. Chivi asked that the minutes from February 13th, 2009 be revised to reflect that he said that he wished Dr. Bolton had provided her comments on the performance of the CSU advocacy and legal services earlier on in discussions. Ms. Stanbra moved to approve the minutes and Mr. Wells seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5. REPORTS AND ITEMS OF INFORMATION

5.1 Sub-committees

Ms. Stanbra reported that the CCSL Special Projects Committee would be meeting immediately following the CCSL meeting to review the winter submissions. Approximately 50 submissions were to be reviewed for funding. The Chair suggested that a summary of funds distributed be reported at the next CCSL meeting, along with any suggestions to improve the submission and review process.

6. STUDENT SERVICES/RECREATION & ATHLETICS BUDGETS

The Chair asked for an update from the Concordia Student Union (CSU) and the Graduate Students' Association (GSA). Mr. Chivi reported that the CSU had held a special council meeting on February 18th, 2009 where the CSU executives brought forth the motion on the Student Services and Recreation & Athletics fees presented at the February 13th, 2009 CCSL meeting. He notified the CCSL that after long discussion, the CSU Council voted against the proposed fee increase in the Student Services fee to students. Mr. Savard said that the GSA had gathered on February 27th, 2009 and although a majority had approved the motion that encompassed the budget dated January 30th, 2009, it did not obtain the required two-thirds majority, therefore the motion did not pass.

Mr. Côté wished to acknowledge that given the absence of support for the motion that had been tabled at the February 13th, 2009 CCSL meeting, adjustments would have to be made to the proposed operating budget. He noted that the question had been previously raised asking if more reductions in the Student Services fee were possible, and the answer was yes, but at what expense. Adjustments would have to be made for the budget to fall within the desirable scenario, and that the Student Services sector was prepared to do so if his understanding was correct. Mr. Côté said that the issue would have to be resolved in a timely fashion considering the time constraints at hand. Mr. Chivi asked if the GSA could have a fee increase while the CSU did not. Mr. Côté responded that all students would be subject to the same fee, regardless of whether or not they were a graduate or an undergraduate student. He added that it would be hard to justify one group paying a higher fee and not another for services available to both. Mr. Chivi wanted the Council to be aware that the hard work and efforts of the Directors was reflected in the discussions at the CSU Council meeting. Much discussion and debate had ensued before their Council had made a decision. Dr. Boisvert asked for detail of the discussion of the CSU in making their decision. Mr. Chivi answered that the discussion did not focus on the consolidation of services, but rather on the increase in the Student Services fee over the next three year period. He noted that the concerns of students at the meeting were similar to those previously raised at CCSL meetings by the student representatives, for example the fact that this would be one of many possible fee increases to students. Dr. Boisvert asked if their disapproval was based on the fee increase, and Mr. Chivi responded yes.

Mr. Côté noted that the next step would be to modify the motion tabled at the February 13th, 2009 CCSL meeting to reflect a zero increase in the Student Services fee over the 2009-2012 period. According to Mr. Côté, the Board of Governors needs to adopt a resolution to set the Student Services and Recreation & Athletics fees even if they remain at the current levels for the 2009-2012 period. Mr. Côté stated that the budgets would have to be modified and reviewed by the CCSL at their next meeting. Mr. Wells asked for more information on what services would suffer from the changes required to keep the Student Services fee at the current level. He was concerned that there were already many changes required for the most recently proposed budget to be feasible. Mr. Wells added that with all due respect to the CSU's position as representatives of the student body, he, as a student himself, questioned whether or not the advantages of maintaining the fee at the current level would outweigh the disadvantages of cutting services offered to students. Mr. Wells added that the general consensus he understood from his informal discussions with students was that to completely remove the options available to students regarding the services available to them would be a greater loss than the gain from maintaining the fee at the current level. He noted the harm of cutting services without complete knowledge of how it will be done. Mr. Chivi responded that a consolidation of services was a proposal tied to the increase in the Student Services fee; there would be no consolidation of services if there were no increase in the fee. Mr. Côté added that further adjustments would have to be made to the Student Services operating budget in order to keep the fee at \$10.26 per credit, but that it would not result in a complete change in its operations. Dr. Boisvert wished to confirm that there would in fact be consequences of maintaining the fee. Mr. Côté agreed, however added that the spirit of maintaining the Student Services fee was in consideration of the students, and that the CCSL would try to protect service to students from these impacts as much as possible.

Mr. Beasley noted that in previous CCSL meetings there had been much dialogue about the effects of the proposed budgets. He cautioned the CCSL about the danger of voting for a new resolution with consequences that had not been fully examined. Mr. Côté reminded the Council that their discussions were limited by the fact that a resolution would have to be presented to the Board of Governors, hopefully in their April 2009 meeting. He replied that reductions would as much as possible focus on general administrative expenditures, with a view to help minimize the effect on direct services to students. He recalled the surplus budgeted in year 1 of the proposed budget, which would be used to offset the deficits budgeted in years 2 and 3. This surplus would still exist, but would be lower than previously anticipated. Mr. Côté noted that the Board of Governors would not only be concerned with any increase or decrease to fees, but also that the 2009-2012 budgets for Students Services and Recreation & Athletics are balanced.

Mr. Wells said that given the recent comments, perhaps he had misunderstood the effects of a zero increase to the Student Services fee. His main concern was to avoid a negative impact on students, but that if the services offered could be maintained with a zero increase in the fee, then he would support moving ahead. Mr. Wells asked for details of what and how the services would be affected by keeping the Student Services fee at the

current \$10.26 per credit level. Mr. Côté suggested that the impacts could be discussed at a special CCSL meeting that could take place in the next week or two. Ms. Sheahan gave insight as to where some impacts would be felt in the Recreation & Athletics sector. For example, proposed investments in expanding Le Gym to meet increased demand as well as some new initiatives to help the University Athletics programs develop as other institutions have would not happen. Further, employment of part time staff would also be affected, including that normally provided to students. Ms. Lipscombe asked for clarification as to whether or not the CCSL could review the budget on an annual basis and make adjustments if they were feasible. Mr. Côté acknowledged that the contextual environment may change, but this would not necessarily lead to a change in the budget. He replied that there would have to be a significant change in order to revise the budget. For example, if FTEs were significantly lower than forecasted, budgets may need to be changed, perhaps even the University's budget. Mr. Chivi asked if a budget proposal had been prepared in case of a zero increase to the fee. Mr. Côté said that it would have to be reviewed to determine where other adjustments would have to be made.

Mr. Goldfinch suggested presenting a revised resolution to the Board of Governors with a zero increase to the fee, then the CCSL could discuss the adjustments to the budget later. Mr. Côté explained that if a department were faced with a considerable shift in demand on a specific area in their service, they would be able to adjust accordingly by redistributing their allotted funds within their budget. The total funds available would not change, however where they were being spent within the department could be modified. The motion previously tabled at the February 13th, 2009 meeting was revised to the following:

Whereas the Council is the highest non-academic advisory committee in the University making recommendations regarding the quality of student life;

Whereas the mandate of CCSL, among others, is to develop and evaluate the Student Services and Recreation and Athletics budgets as well as the Student Services and Recreation & Athletics fees and recommend these to the Board of Governors for approval;

Be it resolved that the per credit Student Services and the Recreation & Athletics fees charged to undergraduate and graduate students be set as outlined herein and to take effect with registrations for the Summer term in each of the next three successive academic years (2009/1, 2010/1 and 2011/1 respectively) and further to remain at the 2011-2012 level thereafter unless otherwise determined by CCSL.

The Student Services fee is to remain at the current level of \$10.26 per credit for each of the fiscal years 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012.

The Recreation & Athletics Fee is to remain at the current level of \$2.92 per credit for each of the fiscal years 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012.

The motion passed unanimously.

CCSL will convene at a future meeting to discuss further the impacts of amendments to the three year Student Services and Recreation & Athletics Budgets for fiscal years 2009/2010, 2010/2011, 2011/2012, in order to maintain a zero increase in the aforementioned fees.

Mr. Wells wished to express that he felt he had spoken out of turn with regards to his comments made about the CSU's mandate received from their council. He apologized for his comments that he felt may have been inappropriate in light of the impacts on services offered to students.

A discussion ensued on whether or not a special CCSL meeting would take place. Mr. Côté said that the important matter would now be to have the resolution appear on the agenda for the Board of Governors April 2009 meeting. He would inquire if the resolution would be sufficient in order for it to become an item on their agenda, or if the budget would have to be presented as well. If the latter were the case, then a special meeting of the CCSL would be necessary. The proposed time of March 20th, 2009 at 10am was agreed upon if a special meeting was required. Mr. Savard asked if the CCSL had to have approval on the budget from the CSU and the GSA before presenting to the Board of Governors. The Chair clarified that the reaching of an agreement with the CSU and the GSA to comply with the FIO guidelines of the MELS was only necessary in the case of an increase in the fee.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Chivi thanked the members of Council who attended the speech given by director Spike Lee, part of the CSU Speaker Series, and noted that the event was a great success. Ms. Lipscombe wished to congratulate the Stingers men's basketball team for their win in overtime in their final game the night before.

8. NEXT MEETING

A tentative special meeting time was agreed upon for March 20th, 10am. Ms. Broad will contact the Council if the special meeting will be necessary. The next confirmed meeting is April 3rd, 2009, 10am Loyola AD-308.

9. TERMINATION OF MEETING

Dr. Boisvert motioned to terminate the meeting. Ms. Ghadban seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.